DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 295 FL 026 335

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TITLE From Context to Curriculum: A Case Study of Communicative Language Teaching in China.
PUB DATE 2000-06-02
NOTE 30p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communicative Competence (Languages); Curriculum Design; *Curriculum Development; *Educational Innovation; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *China

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT) methodology within the English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) context in the Peoples' Republic of China. It suggests investigating the context of an English language teaching program first, and then adapting the program to the Chinese context in order to more effectively implement the communicative methodology. Key questions regarding curriculum design are discussed. The English teaching program at a private commercial college is used as a case study of an EFL context in China. It is concluded that there must be a compromise between CLT methodology and the EFL context, because CLT is at root a curriculum development. Three principles are judged to be helpful in understanding this problem: (1) In EFL teaching, the impact from the context on a program is more significant than in the English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) context. The more that is known about the context, the better the new methodology can be adapted into the program; (2) Introducing methods of classroom activities is helpful, but not sufficient; adaptation should start from the beginning of the curriculum design; and (3) Adaptation of teaching methodology will be more successful if the theory of learning and teaching where CLT methodology is derived from is reviewed and studied with the characteristics of the program context in mind. (Contains 56 references.) (KFT)

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Abstract

This paper discusses the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching methodology within the EFL context in China. It suggests a preliminary stage of context-based communicative curriculum development in an EFL context in China. Such a preliminary stage aims to investigate the context of an English Language teaching program first, and the process of adapting the program to its context for implementing communicative methodology. A framework for such a context investigation is proposed. Key questions regarding the integration of the context study into curriculum design are also discussed. The context and innovation of the English teaching program in Private Pui Ching Commercial College is used here as a case study of an EFL context in China.

Introduction

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is regarded as the major innovation of the language teaching methodology since 1970s (Habermas, 1970; Hymes, 1971; Jakobovits, 1970; Savignon, 1972), and is now the most prevailing approach in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) classrooms. In spite of the success of CLT in TESL, its efficiency in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is still a controversial topic (Anderson, 1993; Cooke, 1986; Harvey, 1985; Li, 1997; Maley, 1984; Penner, 1995; Sampson, 1984). Here, TESL refers to teaching English to those whose native language is not English in English speaking communities, and TEFL refers to English language teaching in non-English speaking communities where English is a foreign language (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Richards, 1985; Stern, 1983). In fact, the issue of context of foreign language teaching did not gain its significance until the turning up of the CLT. For the other ever-popular methodologies such as audio-lingual, grammar-translation and situational methodology, teaching and learning activities take place within the domains of an explicit syllabus and textbooks.

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Content of the classes is predominated and programmed systematically. Different contexts do not make distinctive differences to a program. Teaching and learning using these methodologies are thus relatively independent to context. To the contrary, CLT methodology, as it emphasizes on authentic language input, real-life like language practice and creative generation of language output, highly depends on its context. It needs a language milieu to provide authentic input of language use and requires opportunity for the students to use the language in a real life way. It also implies the use of wide materials and the employment of highly qualified teachers to manage the creative classroom potentials. (Bachman, 1990; Breen and Candlin, 1980; Brown, 1994B; Brumfit, 1984; Howatt, 1984; Nunan, 1988; Richards and Rogers, 1986; Savignon, 1997)

It is reported that CLT does not always repeat its success in EFL countries. EFL teacher also complained that CLT was designed for ESL rather than for EFL (Li, 1997). For example, CLT now is prevailing and successful in the ESL classrooms in English speaking countries. Some expatriate teachers of English coming to teach in China tried to introduce CLT into EFL teaching in China, but more often than not, it is not as successful as in the ESL programs in their countries, and sometimes fail to attract the local instructors and students (Barlow and Lowe, 1985; Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Penner, 1995). When they left China, the old way of teaching came back in most cases. The dependence of CLT on its context seems to be a way to understand this failure. When the introduction of the communicative language teaching methodology from ESL to EFL context like China is taken place, the differences between TESL and TEFL seem to be overlooked. As well, the complicity of EFL context is inadequately estimated.

Obviously, the nature and diversity of EFL contexts are not fully explored. Stern (1983) mentioned some of the differences such as language environments and learner's motivations, but the implications of these differences were not discussed in detail, especially those involved with the basic principles of applied linguistics. Sampson (1984) raised some fundamental questions that revealed the cultural, political and educational gaps between different countries. Mckey (1992) had a wider awareness of this issue and discussed it from the perspective of expatriate teachers. As there exist huge varieties of diverse values, traditions, cultures, political regimes and

educational structures in EFL countries, the EFL context is far more complicated than the ESL context (Mckey, 1992). This complicity has its implications for a re-visit of the basic theories of language teaching and learning. The adaptation of the CLT methodology under the EFL situation should involve a re-visit of the learning theories that CLT is derived from. An adaptation only of the classroom techniques is in fact oversimplifying the task and misleading the future of CLT in EFL context.

Another important impact of the complicity finds its way in the development of curriculum. Usually, the curriculum design starts from needs analysis (Brindley, 1989; Brown, 1996). In an EFL context, there ought to be a preliminary stage to investigate the context of a particular program before the actual beginning of curriculum design to find out the enabling and limiting factors coming with the context. This stage is necessary in order to ask the right questions in needs analysis and work with the limits and constraints of the context in deciding goals and objectives, developing teaching materials, fulfilling teaching, testing and evaluation. Dubin and Olshtain (1986:5-22) suggested such a preliminary work – a fact-finding stage. In this paper, this preliminary stage is called context assessment. It specifically concentrates on the application of communicative language teaching methodology in an EFL context. It aims at providing a starting point for the adaptation of CLT methodology in curriculum development. In order to facilitate this context assessment, there should be a framework that can be helpful in recognizing the important factors and understanding the functions of these key factors in an EFL context. This paper is a case study of such a context assessment stage. The process to integrate this stage into the curriculum design is also discussed.

This study is originated from our concern of the introduction of CLT English teaching in Private Pui Ching Commercial College (PPCCC) in the city of Guangzhou, which is one of the pioneering cities in economy and education reform in China. PPCCC is one of the private model institutes in China. It provides a three-year schooling post-secondary education to its students mainly from Guangdong province. As a private college, it enjoys relative freedom of policy-making and sufficient provide funding. English as a foreign language is one of the two most important subjects in PPCCC (another being Computer Science). The focus of TEFL is to have its students competent in English in their future jobs. The general English

requirements are that;

1. they are able to understand their work assignments in English in both written and oral form. Reading and understanding documents relevant to their work are also highly required.
2. they are able to exchange ideas clearly with their colleagues in English. This includes social interaction, exchanging information, suggesting, persuading, negotiating, recommending, and warning, etc.
3. they are able to write business letters, reports and other documents relevant to their work.

The necessity of this study also lies in the demand of efficient English teaching to meet the increasing language demands of the students in PPCCC for better communication at their future workplace. The labor market expects its candidates fluent in English, especially in speaking and listening. Furthermore, according to an informal survey (Sun and the others, 1996) in PPCCC, 90 percent of the students who attended the survey chose speaking and listening as "most important" among listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. Eighty-two percent of the students were not satisfied with their English classes, the way they are conducted at PPCCC, and demanded a change. Similar request has also received in other universities and colleges in China, especially in private or community colleges. English teachers and the English program at PPCCC are under tremendous pressure to modify the English teaching methodology being used. CLT methodology gradually heard its voice in China. Students in private collages and universities especially have an urgent demand of communicative competence than the students in public universities. Students in private colleges and universities rely on the labor market for a job after graduation. Correspondingly, private colleges and universities are more flexible in policy-making and administration than public universities. For example, PPCCC is under the direction of its board that consists mainly of Hong Kong people or overseas Chinese, thus western education theory and methodology are preferred.

The study of the whole diversity and possible varieties of all the EFL contexts are, however, not the focus of this paper. This paper discusses the English language context in China within the PPCCC so that issues in relation to CLT and the EFL context in term of curriculum development can be fully addressed. The paper is in two

parts. The first part discusses the framework of context assessment in language teaching program design at PPCCC, which offers a description of the context when CLT is introduced into PPCCC. The second part focuses on how to integrate such a context into its curriculum development. Three key questions are discussed in order to clear the ground for this integration process. The situation of English teaching in PPCCC is reported as a case study of applying CLT in Chinese private colleges.

A discussion of the ESL context in PPCC in China

Brown (1994a) defined foreign language contexts as "those in which students do not have ready-made contexts for communication beyond their classroom." Dubin and Olshtain (1986) further explored the concept and put it into categories such as language setting, patterns of language use in society, group and individual attitudes towards language, and the political and national context. Brown's definition is too general for the purpose of this paper. Dubin and Olshtain's categories display a clear and practical approach to find facts in context study for appropriate teaching methodology. In this paper, an EFL context in China from the communicative perspective consists of factors in a given situation of a certain English language program that directly influence the extent and the way foreign language learners are exposed to, and acquire a foreign language in and out classroom. These factors interplay and compose the condition and provision of the language teaching program in a situation where English is neither one of the official languages nor the native nor working language of all/part of the citizens in the society. The context can be cultural, political and educational. One of the key phrases of the above definition is " a given situation of a certain program". Due to the great diversity of different EFL contexts in different countries and even different institutes in one country (Xie and Derwing, 1996), the definition of EFL context for this paper is carefully confined to that of an individual program, i.e. the English program at PPCCC. It is operational for the development of a program or the innovation of an existing one. For example, in China, there are 1) significant imbalance of economic and social development among regions, 2) colorful local traditions and cultures, 3) various types of educational institutes (such as public, community, private colleges and universities, etc.), and 4) difference in resources and in qualifications of teachers, etc. All these make it a strong

case for analyzing the context on individual cases rather than over-generalizing the situation.

According to the above definition, it is obvious that EFL context is not only the language milieu but also factors playing a role in CLT in EFL countries. Based on the framework provided by Dubin and Olshtain (1986), in our process of introducing CLT into PPCCC, the following elements are used to form a framework to assess the context for a new language program (see Figure One). The reason for choosing these elements is firstly that they have a direct and evident impact on the success of a communicative language program and, secondly, they are relatively easy to observe and analyze. This framework suggested below focuses on only the most influencing factors under the EFL context in PPCCC. The setting of this framework is not meant to be exclusive.

Educational policy: It refers to the national, local and institutional policies that fix the limits in some respects of a language program (Mckay, 1992). In general, the policy for English teaching is very encouraging in China, (Wang, 1986). However, in different institutions, the situation may be different. In PPCCC, for the innovation of English teaching curriculum, the following categories are explored as components of institutional policies: 1) funding; 2) criteria of student assessment[1] and teacher evaluation; 3) employment policies (e.g. expatriate teachers); 4) size of classes; 5) teaching hours and schedule.

As a private institution, PPCCC has more freedom in policy-making. Its authority is enthusiastic in innovation of the English teaching methodology. More resources and funding are allocated to English teaching than to other subjects. The national grammar-centered tests are challenged by new communicative-oriented assessment criteria, though students still take part in College English Test. English class size is relatively small (20-30). Teaching hours are above the average in China (the average is about 4-6 while more than 12 hours a week in PPCCC). The employment of teachers is relatively flexible. About 20 expatriate teachers are employed every year. Teachers are encouraged to try new methods and technologies such as CLT and multimedia technology. Teachers are also expected to participate in in-service training

[1] In china, the matriculate examination and the National College English Tests are designed to emphasize on reading and grammar. If an English language program neglects this assessment requirement, it will come across resistance from students. However, these examinations are not compulsory to all the college students in China. Universities and colleges can have their own choice, especially those three year-schooling colleges. PPCCC is trying to develop its own assessment system for the

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programs, adapt teaching materials and design various teaching materials. These are important components in teacher evaluation.

Educational Tradition: It refers to the positive and negative heritage of education history. Traditional methodology and its effect on the preconception and behaviors of teachers and students are emphasized here. However, we should not neglect its influence on administration staff, parents and other associated groups. The negative side of this heritage produces some substantial obstacles and unconscious preconceptions that impede the exporting of CLT. It brings extra pressure in teacher training and longer time for the student to get accustomed to new classroom activities. This problem involves the different preconceptions such as; views of knowledge and learning, of teacher roles, of learner roles and of student-teacher relationship (Li 1997: 183-187). In PPCCC, the teachers are from all over China. However, they employ almost the same teaching methods and share similar views on language teaching. English teaching in PPCCC used to be highly test-entered, teacher-centered, and textbook-centered. It emphasizes on delivery of knowledge rather than training of language competence. Teachers believe grammar and language points are the infrastructure of a language, and their students should be able to communicative competent automatically if they master the knowledge. For some teachers, teaching the right thing in the right way (in term of grammar etc.) is a moral responsibility rather than a simple issue of teaching methodology. Change is slow and painful. An expectation of methodology revolution over night is unrealistic and will exacerbate the innovation.

Language setting: It refers to the way the target language is used in a country. It defines the availability of resources of authentic language input out of classroom and the way student will use the foreign language after graduation. It could be interactive or passive. In PPCCC, the study of language setting focuses on 1) the extent of student English input out of classroom; the language exposure being interactive or passive; 3) the input being authentic and 4) the input being appropriate for the target students.

Fortunately, in Guangzhou where the PPCCC is located, the language setting is promising. There are two English newspapers and several English magazines available. English radio broadcast and TV channels from Hong Kong can also be

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specific needs of their students.

accessed. Students are able to listen to BBC (Britain Broadcast Company) and VOA (Voice of America) to improve their listening though it is not publicly encouraged by the Chinese Government. In PPCCC, there are more than 20 expatriate teachers who communicate with the students on a daily basis. English club is another effort to create appropriate language input for the students. However, comparing with the language input of ESL students, access to English of the students in PPCCC is still very limited.

Teaching materials: CLT features itself with the use of authentic teaching materials. CLT materials are composed of not only textbooks but also radio broadcasts, video programs, newspaper articles, real-life dialogues. In PPCCC, we encounter two kinds of difficulties in teaching materials. One is the availability of materials and the other is the adoption and adaptation of materials into teaching activities. The later is even more difficult for us. Although resources are not sufficient, we still can get some from English speaking countries through alumni and expatriate teachers. Problem lies in how to decide the level and appropriateness, and the degree of language difficulty. The balance is hard to keep. It is also strenuous to predict the students' problems when they come across these materials in class. Brown (1996:139-178) suggested procedures of adopting and adapting materials. In EFL context, we think it is essential to modify the procedures first. In PPCCC, foreign teachers are encouraged to adopt and adapt materials into teaching according to their experience and familiarity with their students.

Another consideration is the political concern of the content of materials (Cooke, 1986). In China, English teachers are not supposed to use materials potentially against the political structure or hazardous to the identity of Chinese culture. Morality is also a big concern in China.

Instructors: Qualifications of CLT teachers requires native or close to native language competence and a good knowledge about the culture and society in English speaking countries. In PPCCC, the local teachers come across two specific problems in CLT. The first one is their lack of proficiency in English, especially in spoken English, and in sociolinguistic competence. English language is a foreign language, and English culture is a foreign culture and they usually find it difficult to handle the CLT activities in their own classrooms. The second problem is their tradition of language teaching that is characterized with teacher-centered teaching, structure-based

instruction and drill repetition. With such a tradition, it is not surprising that they have their own interpretation of CLT. Li (1997) reported that some teachers simply understand communicative teaching as merely a concentration on listening and speaking or language games. The same thing happens in PPCCC. For example, some teachers believe communicative teaching simply means using more games to attract the students' attention. Some think CLT is a method for teaching speaking English but not reading and writing. Researchers have pointed out that it is more difficult to persuade teachers to accept CLT than the students in China (Anderson, 1993). Some teachers are reluctant to accept CLT as an innovation of teaching methodology (Burnaby and Sun, 1989). It is very important to find out their preconceptions and to offer right training so that their experiences can be used positively. As for teachers who are native English speakers, they may find they do not understand the host language, culture and their students, which is also a problem. As Harvey (1985) mentioned that "EFL in China needs western experience and expertise, not western dogma."

Learners: EFL learners in a language program are from comparable culture backgrounds. They usually share the similar learning experience and possess resembling learning strategy. This similarity is an indispensable factor a curriculum developer must take into account. According to Stern (1983), EFL students usually vary in their purpose of learning a foreign language in an extensive range. It implies that they may have different motivations and attitudes towards English learning than ESL students. For CLT, student personality also plays an important role (Burstall, 1978; Brown, 1994b; Oxford, 1992). Are the students used to learn individually or cooperatively? Are they independent or dependent learners? How are they adaptable to new way of learning? In general, the stereotype of Chinese student is described as adamant learners who enjoy rote memorization of grammar rules and spend all their time sitting in the corner of the classroom emotionlessly refusing participation in communicative activities. It is not necessarily true for all the Chinese students. In PPCCC, we observed a tendency that the students are becoming increasingly active in class. It must be pointed out that it is complicated in most cases to derive the truth from a classroom phenomenon in an EFL context. For example, some teachers who have tried CLT in China complained that their students were unwilling to participate

in the communicative activities. It is explained as the impact of traditional learning strategy of the students. That is not necessarily the case. What makes the students resistant to change may be one of the following:

- their disability in expressing themselves in English;
- their suspicious attitude towards the effectiveness of the new methodology;
- the overwhelming pressure of the examinations which is characterized by discrete language points;
- they simply don't know for sure what's going on.

According to our observation in PPCCC, if teaching activities are suitable to the student level and the rules are clearly demonstrated, students are very happy to take part in. In fact, in some of the foreign teacher's classes, they surprised their teachers with their willingness and ready ness in participating activities. They usually give positive response to teaching and they are satisfied with their improvement in English. Other people also reported similar findings (Harvey, 1985; White, 1989).

In PPCCC, the weak point of the students is their low proficiency in English language. Usually, when they enter the college, they have a vocabulary of about 1000-2000 words and phrases. In addition, they know basic rules of grammar but make mistakes in writing a paragraph. Their main learning strategy is still rote memorization and silent reading. Nevertheless, we find they are ready to change.

Among the above elements, educational policies and educational traditions are outer setting of a language program while the language environment and materials are considered as resource of language input. Instructors and learners are participants of a language program. Instructors, learners, and teaching materials are also integrated as parts of teaching. The reason why we put them into the category of context is that they may come up with new characteristics in EFL context, and these new characteristics bring some problems that are usually minor in TESL but major in TEFL. These problems are also what we have to take into account preliminarily in developing an English language program.

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Integrating context into curriculum

In the previous section, the framework of EFL context in China is discussed in

terms of the situation in PPCCC. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the framework is established for a context assessment of curriculum development that focuses on the investigation of the context of the innovation of English language teaching in PPCCC. The process of integrating the context into curriculum in PPCCC explore the following questions, which are closely connected to the context and thus fundamental to design an effective program.

1. How communicative a program can be in the given EFL situation in China such as the one at PPCCC?

2. What objectives can be achieved realistically for such a program in China?

3. What would the teaching activities look like within the context?

These questions are fundamental since answers will define the primary characteristics of a program within its context and give guidelines for decision-making on the curriculum design. In trying to answer these questions, the theory of program development and the theory of language teaching and learning are involved.

1. How communicative a program can be in the given EFL situation in China?

This question refers to the compromise between the CLT and the traditional methods that still prevailing in China. If there is not a dramatic change of the whole foreign language education system, the exported or innovated program is actually besieged by traditional programs. Compromise is in fact unavoidable. The following facts decide that the innovation of language teaching in PPCCC is one with compromise.

1.Traditional perceptions and views of language teaching which see language teaching as a process of delivering knowledge rather than communicative skills,

2. Limited resources of language input and teaching materials. It is difficult to provide sufficient and authentic opportunities for the students to practice English.

3. Lack of qualified teachers for CLT and the traditional learning strategies of the students. Teacher training is the key issue.

As Richards and Rodgers (1986:66) stated with great brevity, communicative language teaching "aims to (a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication." In practice, there are quite a few possibilities in applying this general principle into practice (Richards

and Rodgers 1986:74). Briefly, according to Howatt (1984:279), there is a strong and a weak version of communicative language teaching. The weak version "stress the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching." The strong version " advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself." If we can see them as a matter of the composition of different communicative activities, then it is not only the intention of curriculum designers but also the conditions of the situation that play a role in deciding the characteristics of a communicative language program.

Learning process occur both consciously and subconsciously (Littlewood, 1981). The development of language teaching methodology from structural to functional and notional presents a shift of focuses. Structure is still an essential element of language. The belief that communicative methodology is more effective and efficient does not necessarily mean that methodologies centered on structure do not work at all. Johnson (1982:156) suggested a distinction between "communicative practice (of minimum control)" and "communicative drills" which accept the need for controlled practice Yalden's "proportional approach" Yalden (1985:132) proposed a "proportional approach" in which "the first is simply to retain old techniques, but to adapt them to reflect the functional component of meaning more clearly." Then "the teacher tries to provide practice that will be more like communicative activities in the outside world".

All these efforts provide an opportunity to revive the old methodologies in a new view of language-the communicative perception. Gatbonton and Gu (1994) reported their choice of a practical methodology as "one that combined the best of western-based communicative approaches (insistence on genuine communication as a medium for learning) and the best of traditional Chinese teaching methodology (reliance on activities that focus on the formal structure of language: text analysis, grammatical explanations, drills, text and rule memorization)." Li (1989) believes the communicative methodology and the Chinese traditional methodology can be complementary to each other. Similar attitude can be found in Allen and Spada (1983), Maley(1984), White(1989), Fei and Duan (1993), Rao(1996).

Case study (1): English language teaching in PPCCC

In PPCCC, communicative language teaching is under experiment in its unique way with a compromising nature. The teaching of English language is divided into two parts: The traditional teaching, which uses grammar-translation method and communicative teaching carried out by about 20 foreign teachers. Students take part in both of these two different classes. The focus of traditional teaching is on reading and writing with its emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. This part is in accord to the National English Syllabus in China. In the meantime, the communicative teaching division concentrates on speaking and listening with communicative competence as its core. As for the size of class, the traditional teaching class consists of about 30 students and the communicative class under 20. The school authorities try their best not to intervene the foreign teacher's teaching. They have their own offices and under the leadership of relatively experienced teacher among them. The textbooks used is only for reference and they are encouraged to develop teaching materials based on their own experience and their knowledge of their students.

We have to admit that our students enjoy the foreign teachers' classes more than our traditional teaching ones and the foreign teachers covertly complain to us, the Chinese teachers, that the students are so enthusiastic in practice English with them that they don't have any private time. However, the students did tell us that they obtain a sense of security in traditional classes because they learn more grammar and vocabulary in our classes.

It's obvious that though the students are learning English without sufficient outside class input, and they don't see the opportunity and necessity of communicating in English in their daily life, they are really motivated and seeking all possible opportunities to speak English in their foreign teachers' classes. With a lot of fragment and gestures, they are able to express clearly to their foreign teachers (Derwing, 1991). There are signs that they communicate with a true desire. Some of them try to speak English with the Chinese teachers. They ask the Chinese teachers to speak as much English as possible in even traditional classes. They urge the colleges to fire teachers with poor English competence. The greatest pressure they put on the teachers is their demand of innovating the traditional classes to make it more "active and attractive".

What is interesting is that it seems thatthe students employ different leaning strategies in traditional and communicative classes. They sit silent, memorize grammar points and vocabulary in traditional classes while they move around, talk, laugh, and even shout in communicative classes. These dual characteristics bring confusion and frustration to both Chinese teachers and foreign teachers.

Up till now, we have not found an effective and efficient way to evaluate the outcomes of the communicative classes. However, the responses of the labor market and the employers are rather encouraging. Based on the responses, the college is trying to integrate the two kinds of classes and develop its own syllabus and textbook.

2. What objective can be achieved for a program in EFL context in China?

The objective of a language program is to satisfy the needs of the students. But in some EFL context it is constrained by its local conditions. For example, Li (1997) reported that Chinese English teacher complain about their deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence. It makes it impossible for them to teach these competence to their students, and objective beyond the teacher's ability does not make sense.

Piepho (1981:8) distinguished five levels of objectives in a communicative approach:

1. an integrative and content level;
2. a linguistic and instrumental level;
3. an affective level of interpersonal relationship and conduct;
4. a level of individual learning needs;
5. a general educational level of extra-linguistic goal.

Combining with Gardner and Lambert's distinction between integrative orientation and instrumental orientation in studying motivation of language learning (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), we propose a distinction between the objectives of learning to integrate to the foreign society and those of learning to use the language as an instrument. Both of these two kinds of objective can be at the above mentioned five levels with different emphasis, extension and orientation. We don't suggest that there are two languages for these two purposes. We also don't imply that learning language as an instrument can neglect any of the four aspects of language competence discussed by Bachman (Bachman 1990:87). Nevertheless, we do believe that different people possess different capacity of language competence and the differences are relevant to

their experience and profession (and perhaps some other factors). The essential structure is the same, but the maturation and extension are differing. For CLT curriculum design, this distinction implies we should select pedagogical tasks according to students' specific needs.

EFL students may have various purposes in learning English. In China, it can be:

1. to prepare for the future job
2. to read technical materials only available in English
3. to pass an examination to graduate
4. to be qualified for the approval of a professional entitle
5. to study in English speaking countries
6. to immigrate to English speaking countries
7. to identify from future contenders
8. to gain a promotion in job
9. to enjoy English literature
10. to satisfy curiosity of foreign culture
11. to travel in other countries using English as a international language

This list can be much longer and every item may have some sub-items. Majority of the motivations listed can be interpreted as instrumental orientation (1,2,3,4,8,9,11). According to our observation, most of the Chinese students' motivation of learning a foreign language is among the first three purposes. Only very small number of students expects to immigrate to English speaking countries or to study there. That is to say, most of the students in China learning English as an instrument and an English program must take this into consideration, to not only save student's time but also equip student with exactly what they need.

This distinction between integrative and instrumental objectives has its specific significance in CLT in China. Firstly, under the limited conditions, helping the students to learn English as an instrument in their future job may be the objective possible for most of the English programs in China. Secondly, this distinction helps to review the teacher's preconception about CLT. Burnaby and Sun (1989) reported that Chinese teachers believe that CLT was only applicable for those who are going to live or study in English speaking countries and claimed that Chinese method was suitable for Chinese student. They supposed that deferent methodology be employed in

teaching with different purpose. It seems they were exaggerating the difference and neglecting the nature of language as media of communication. This is also with detriment to teaching English.

The probable questions lying here are 1) is CLT a suitable facilitator in achieving the goal of teaching English as an instrument; and 2) whether teaching activities concentrating on the instrumental respect of language is still fully communicative and the language still authentic. Now it is too early to answer these questions as there is not enough empirical proof.

Richards and Rodgers (1986:72) summed up the elements of the learning theory of communicative teaching methodology as the following:

- Communication principle: Activities that involve real communication promote learning;
- Task principle: Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning (Johnson, 1982);
- Meaningfulness principle: language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

We do not see any conflicts between these principles and communication with English as an instrument. Teaching English instrumentally and communicatively may happen simultaneously. Practice also turn out some positive proofs for this argument (Li, 1984; White, 1989; Sun, 1990, Forseth, 1991, Tool, 1992).

Case study (2): Objectives of English teaching in PPCCC

In PPCCC, in setting up objectives of language teaching, we emphasized on the following facts:

1. The students are in various business majors. The requirement of their future professions in English language plays an important leading role in objective-setting process.

2. The availability of authentic language input is still much limited. The foreign teachers are a great resource, and they offered more than we expected, but the ratio of foreign teachers and students is as low as 1:100. Complementary resources as English club, books in library and English movies are arranged, but it is still too insufficient compared with that of ESL environment.

3. Obviously, most of the students will not live, study or work in an English

speaking country.

4. The students expect not only the language competence, but also the introduction of the western culture and the opportunity of broadening way of thinking.

5. Based on a survey of former graduates of the college, most of students will work in domestic or international enterprises in the future. They mainly use English as an instrument for the following purposes:

A. Social interaction including greeting, talking about the weather, news, culture, community affairs, personal information, etc.

B. Sharing ideas and exchanging information, following and giving instructions in work, receiving information and responding, passing information.

C. Suasion (getting things done) including suggesting, persuading, negotiating, recommending, warning, etc.

D. All the above tasks are fulfilled in a business context.

(The category framework is adopted from the Canadian language Benchmark)

In interpreting these facts into objectives, we are also aware that the goal of education is not to teach student everything they may need, but to prepare them for a good beginning of their future. As far as foreign language teaching is concerned, it is impossible to predict exactly what students will come across in the future. The content of teaching is basic language skills as well as the approach of learning in communication independently. We believe student, equipped with the necessary skills and approach, can learn what they need more effectively and efficiently when they have to learn it in their life, work or study after they graduate from school.

The fact that we teach English as an instrument does not mean that we overlook the essential language competence or its sociolinguistic aspect. This attitude is mainly embodied in the selection of objectives, tasks and the placement of emphasis of teaching. We also try to integrate more business situation and vocabulary into task design. The principle, as previously discussed, is to equip our students necessary skills and approach of learning independently.

3. What would the teaching activities be like?

Communicative teaching activity in ESL programs claims the following essential features:

1. It is task-based. According to H. Douglas Brown, task-based English teaching

concentrates on "communicative tasks that learners need to engage in outside the classroom." (Brown 1994).

2. It is learner-centered. The emphasis of teaching activity is placed on student initiative and interaction. Students are expected to participate the activities as real people and take the responsibility of their learning (Nunan, 1988).

3. It emphasizes on the use of authentic language input. It means authentic teaching materials, teacher's native or near native language competence and a true language melieu are necessary in order to produce communication in classroom (Munby, 1978).

In the adaptation of CLT in EFL context, we will have to restudy these characteristics with the following facts in mind.

1. Students may not have opportunities to undertake the pedagogical task outside of classroom immediately. Supplementary practices of a task are necessary.

2. Grammar is more important in EFL than in ESL. It may not be necessary to learn grammar systematically, but totally neglecting of it may be even more harmful (Harvey, 1985:182; Murcia, 1991; Li, 1997: 158). Brown firmly points out that " for adults, the question is not so much whether to teach or not to teach grammar, but rather, what are the optimal conditions for overt teaching of grammar." (Brown, 1994A:349).

3. Language input is mainly from classroom activities in EFL context. Language melieu is insufficient and authentic materials are usually not enough.

4. Traditional methods of language teaching still have impact on both teacher and student, even though the program is a communicative one.

5. Usually, in ESL language programs, students attend classes 3 to 4 hours a day and five days a week while EFL is one of the subjects of student, that is it may have only 4-10 hours a week.

Thus an ideal teaching activity in EFL classes should be 1) task-based with supplementary practices and content of grammar as integral parts (Jones, 1992), 2) the dearth of authentic language input is compensated by various resources, 3) teacher role and student role are clearly defined and learner-centeredness is fortified, 4) traditional teaching activities that can be modified in line with communicative methodology are preferred to totally new activities and 5) teaching activities could be

relatively independent to each other, but there should be a continuity in the successive ones.

Different models of adapting communicative teaching activity in China have been provided (Allen and Spada, 1983; Li, 1984; Maley. 1984; White, 1989; Forseth, 1991; Tool, 1992; Gatbonton and Gu, 1994). Despite the different name and emphasis of these models, they have prominent similarities. They all developed some remedial activities to help bridge the competence and information gaps and to help the students focus on the objective of teaching. Sometimes there is a preparatory part which facilitate the students with grammar, vocabulary and/or relevant background knowledge (Cynthia White, 1989; Gatbonton and Gu, 1994). Sometimes, a consolidation activity is waiting after the central communicative activity to help student concentrate on the objective of the lesson (Gatbonton and Gu, 1994). What is worth mentioning is that all the three parts of a teaching activity appear in a communicative way, using interactive activities instead of drills or lectures. The formation of these model seems in accord with category of weak version of CLT (Howatt, 1984:279) and the idea of Littlewood (1981:1) who states " one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language."

Basically, in designing teaching activities two processes are involved. One is the process of picking up language skills to form teaching content to fulfill the achievement of the objective. And the second is to convert this content into teaching activity that provides communicative task for the student to carry out. In EFL situation like China, we suggest a complementary process--the process to find out grammar, vocabulary and background knowledge that are relevant to the task and helpful for the student in undertaking the task.

Figure two: From objective to pedagogical task:

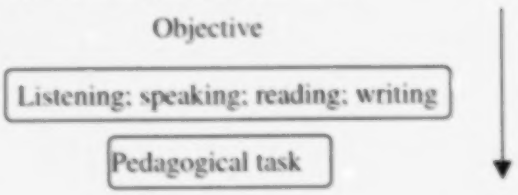
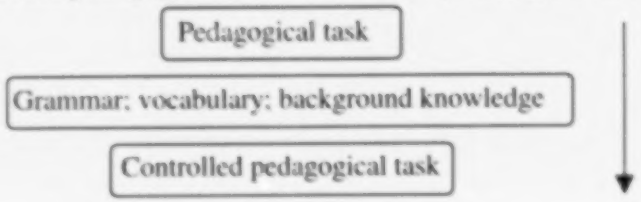


Figure three: From pedagogical task to controlled pedagogical task:



(The process of designing teaching activity)

For the two kinds of tasks, both should keep the communicative nature but with different focus and different way of implementing. The central pedagogical task is learner-centered with full interaction and minimum control while in the controlled one teacher plays a role of director and the activity is designed in a way that grammar, vocabulary and background knowledge are practiced or introduced.

In integrating the two tasks into one teaching activity in class, grammar, vocabulary and background knowledge can be put into a preparatory stage before the communicative activity or a consolidation stage after the communicative activity or in some other way.

Case study (3): Innovation of English teaching in PPCCC

In PPCCC, we have a traditional part and a communicative part presently. The former is carried out by Chinese teachers using the method as text analysis and grammar drilling while the later by foreign teachers with the communicative methodology. The advantage of this arrangement is 1) both native and foreign teachers can do what they are good at, 2) in communicative classes, student have opportunity to practice the grammar and vocabulary they learn in traditional classes and 3) both the native teachers and the students enjoy the security of keeping what they are familiar around. The disadvantages of such an arrangement are also obvious.

1) The students are not well motivated in the traditional classes and the efficiency of learning is not satisfactory.

2) Consistence of teaching contents of the two kinds of classes is difficult to obtain as different textbooks and methodologies are employed.

3) Students are sometimes confused by the different philosophy underlying the different methodologies. It is especially harmful for them to nurture an independent learning approach.

4) Conflicts appear in the allocation of resources. Eclecticism is occurred more often than optimization in order to reach a compromise.

5) Teachers don't see the necessity of learning from each other side because the focus and methodology are so different that they don't know how to integrate the method of the other side into their own teaching.

Now we are trying to adapt the communicative methodology in the traditional teaching classes and integrate these two parts together. The plan is designed on a transitional basis.

The first stage is to introduce some communicative methods into the traditional teaching, for example, using interactive activities in teaching grammar or transferring text analysis into classroom discussion so the students can have more chances to speak English. We expect the native teachers will have a better understanding of CLT and its advantages at this stage.

Secondly, we will try to convert lessons of the textbook of the traditional classes into communicative activities. It is to reorganize the teaching procedure and produce a shift of focus but do not change the content of textbook. For example, if the text of a lesson is about environment protect, we will design a classroom activity and ask the students to do some research on this topic and discuss about it in small groups. The text is used only as the background of this activity. Teacher is no longer the center of teaching. His/her duty is to help student fulfill the task and monitor the process of the activity. Grammar and vocabulary are taught only when necessary. Teacher training will be the emphasis at this stage.

Finally, we will develop a new syllabus based on the needs of our students. Communicative language competence will be the focus of this syllabus. As there is no compulsory national syllabus for three-year schooling professional colleges available in China now, it is possible for us to develop our own. Teaching activity in this syllabus will be task based, learner-centered. Grammar and vocabulary will be

integrated into teaching activity when the central communicative task requires them.

The first and second stages are already in experiment. Volunteer teachers are helped by the Department of English and experienced foreign teachers. Some of the experimenting classes are quite successful. However, some of them are confusing. There are two significant phenomena worth noticing. One is the impact of traditional language teaching preconceptions is insistent. Some teachers still concentrate on grammar and discrete language points though the teaching activity is changed. For them, the new activity is simply a change of the previous printed exercises based on text. This indicates that adoption of communicative view of language is more important than introducing new teaching technique. If they see language as a composition of structures and vocabulary, they will surely misinterpret the communicative teaching activity.

The other important phenomenon is that students tend to use their native language when the task arouses their true interests. We think two factors contribute to this shift of language. Firstly, they have a common language. Secondly, as adults, their knowledge and experience are far more developed than that they can express in English. This tension between what they want to say and what they can say in a foreign language is one of the basic conflicts in introducing CLT into China because CLT benefits from true communication and the students could not afford it due to their relatively deficiency in the language they are learning in a communicative way.

Conclusion

In this paper, a preliminary stage of context assessment of curriculum design in an EFL context in China is suggested. A framework of context is provided for developing a communicative language teaching program in China. In trying to integrating context into curriculum, three fundamental questions are raised and discussed. The situation and practice of adapting communicative language teaching methodology in PPCCC is discussed as a case study. There has to be a compromise between CLT methodology and the conditions and provisions of the context in which it is to be implemented. The adaptation of CLT in the EFL context is first of all a curriculum development, i.e. to integrate the context into a communicative language teaching curriculum.

The problems around the adaptation of communicative language teaching

methodology in China are only partly addressed. We believe the following principles will be helpful in understanding this problem:

1. In EFL teaching, the impact from the context on a program is more significant than that in an ESL context. The more we know about the context, the better we can adapt this new methodology into the program.

2. Introducing methods of classroom activities is helpful, but not sufficient. The adaptation should start from the beginning of the curriculum design. Conditions of the context should be taken into account throughout the whole process of program development.

3. Adaptation of teaching methodology will be more successful if the theory of learning and teaching where CLT methodology is derived from is reviewed and studied with the characteristics of the program context in mind.

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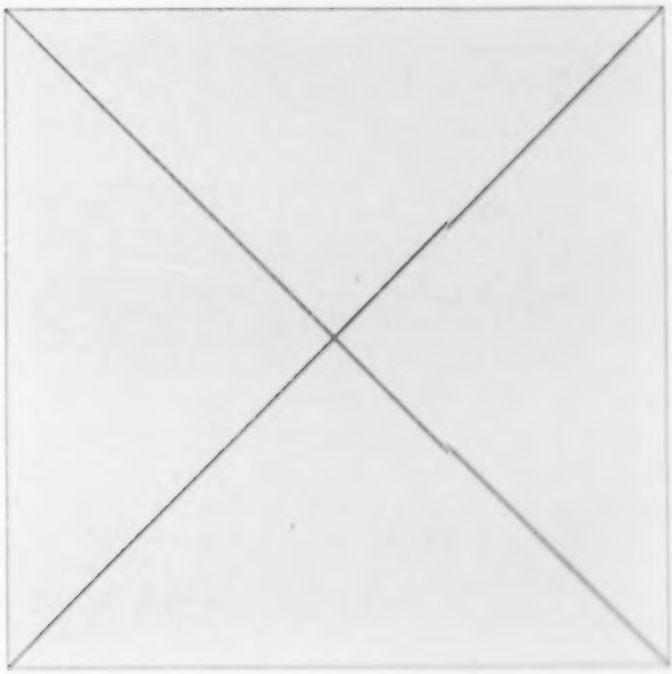
Figure one: Elements of EFL context:



Language environment **Participants** **Outer Setting** policies Educational materials Teaching traditions Educational **Resource of language input** Instructors

Curriculum of language programs

Learners